

University of San Diego

Digital USD

---

USD Vista

USD News

---

3-11-2021

## Vista: March 11, 2021

University of San Diego

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.sandiego.edu/vista>

---

### Digital USD Citation

University of San Diego, "Vista: March 11, 2021" (2021). *USD Vista*. 1108.  
<https://digital.sandiego.edu/vista/1108>

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the USD News at Digital USD. It has been accepted for inclusion in USD Vista by an authorized administrator of Digital USD. For more information, please contact [digital@sandiego.edu](mailto:digital@sandiego.edu).

The Official Student Newspaper of the University of San Diego since 1968

# THE USD VISTA

## California grants \$1.4 million to track hate crimes against Asian Americans

*A rising wave of violence and hate crimes toward Asian-American community elicits response from USD's FUSO and ASA*

TAYLOR DEGUZMAN  
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Racism, hate crimes, and xenophobia toward Asian Americans in the 21st century are not uncharted territory: they have long played a role in American history since the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, white mobs attacking Filipino farmworkers during the 1930s, and Japanese internment camps during the 1940s.

In acknowledging systemic racism and white privilege in America, Asian Americans are often erased from the narrative; what usually alienates Asian Americans is the model minority myth. The model minority myth perpetuates the stereotype that all Asian Americans are successful and prosperous. And in being held

to this standard, Asian Americans' perceived proximity to whiteness removes them from being heard and seen in a world where anti-Asian racism still exists.

Josen Diaz, Ph.D., professor of ethnic studies with a focus on Asian-American studies and Filipino and Filipino-American studies, delved deeper into how the model minority myth negatively impacts other marginalized communities.

"The model minority came out during a time of necessity in the 60s, 70s, and 80s that framed Asian Americans as this hard-working, deeply successful group, but always at the expense of other minority groups, mainly Black Americans, Latinx Americans, and communities like those," Diaz said. "It shapes how people perceive Asian Americans; that they're this group that hasn't

experienced a lot of difficulty or trauma and don't need help, and I think Asian Americans really internalize it."

Because many Asian Americans internalize the model minority myth, Diaz explained that in some ways it can contribute to the lack of reporting Asian-American hate crimes, for fear of getting in trouble or causing more problems. Many incidents go widely unreported.

However, after more than 2,800 reported incidents of racism and discrimination targeting Asian Americans from March 19 to Dec. 31, 2020 and a 150% increase in hate crimes toward Asian Americans from 2019 to 2020, California took action to support the community and address rising anti-Asian sentiment during COVID-19.

California lawmakers

approved 1.4 million dollars to help track and research the rising rate of hate crimes toward the Asian-American community.

Many applaud Assemblymember Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee, for his efforts in securing the funding as part of AB 85, which provides additional resources for California's ongoing pandemic response.

Governor Gavin Newsom officially signed AB 85 on February 23. The 1.4 million dollars will specifically help "Stop AAPI Hate," a reporting center that tracks incidents of hate, violence, harassment, and discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI).

Many of these attacks are  
**See Hate Crimes, Page 2**

### Student employees eligible for vaccine

MARIA SIMPSON  
ASST. NEWS EDITOR

Within the last couple of months, receiving the COVID-19 vaccine has gone from a distant hope to a common reality for many in San Diego, including USD student employees. On March 5, the millionth dose of the vaccine was administered in San Diego County, and this is only the beginning. According to the county's Board of Supervisors, "the county is averaging about 14,000 vaccinations each day, but has the capacity to administer 33,000 vaccinations each day and more than 1,000,000 per month." There is a shortage of doses at the moment, hindering this goal, but with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine approved, more doses are expected to be available soon.

San Diego County is currently in Phase 1B, which includes anyone 65 and older and essential workers in the following sectors (which are at a higher risk of exposure from their work): emergency services, food and agriculture, and childcare and education. Since childcare and education is one of these eligible groups, student employees such as tour guides and Resident

**See Vaccine, Page 2**

### MORE STORIES

#### Study abroad Fall 2021

See News, page 3

#### Op-Ed: Vaccines

See Opinion, page 4

#### Cropper Writer Series

See Feature, page 8

#### How to be TikTok famous

See A&C, page 10

#### Toreros miss WCC tourney

See Sports, page 11

## Workout app partners with USD Campus Recreation to donate meals

*USD Alumna creates app to improve community's wellbeing*

BROOKE TOOMA  
ASST. FEATURE EDITOR

Being active and giving to the community can go hand-in-hand. Students at the University of San Diego now have the opportunity to further the benefits of their workout routine by donating a meal each time they reach a fitness goal.

Vizer is a social fitness rewards app aiming to fight hunger and incentivize users to reach their fitness goals. The app was co-founded by USD alumna Samantha Pantazopoulos, who graduated in 2017. While studying on Semester at Sea, she realized that there was a way to fight unhealthy habits and support social good simultaneously.

After seeing the consequences of bad health within their own family, Pantazopoulos and her



The Bosley Fitness Center is currently closed due to San Diego County guidelines.

Photo courtesy of the University of San Diego

cousin Dylan Barbour decided they wanted to give people the opportunity to make health

achievable, no matter what the circumstances. Through collaboration, dedication, and hard work, they brought their ideas and goals into fruition. Vizer was launched in 2020.

Vizer works on a basis of goals and donations. When a user reaches one of the app's daily activity goals — walking 10,000 steps, exercising for 30 minutes,

or taking a class at a Vizer partner studio — corporate sponsors will donate a meal through a partner food bank on the behalf of the user.

With this idea in mind, Pantazopoulos and Barbour utilized assistance from the helping hands at The Brink Small Business Development Center at  
**See Vizer, Page 8**

Don't miss the latest news.  
Find us online:

 @USDVista  @theusdvista uofsdmedia.com



# NEWS

## California passes bill to target hate crimes against Asian Americans

*With a 150% increase in Asian-American targeted hate crimes, legislators allocated \$1.4 million dollars to tracking these offenses*

**Hate Crimes from Page 1**  
affecting Asian-American elders, who are often helpless and vulnerable. On Jan. 31, an 84-year old man who immigrated from Thailand to San Francisco was on his morning walk when he was violently shoved to the ground by a young man. He later passed away due to injuries from the attack. In Oakland’s Chinatown, footage captured a 91-year old senselessly pushed to the ground by a man who would later be identified and arrested by Oakland Police. These publicized attacks have shaken the Asian-American community and especially USD’s Asian-American community.

Junior Anica Quizon, Filipino Ugnayan Student Organization’s (FUSO) Vice President Internal, shared her reaction to the recent attacks.

“Anti-Asian rhetoric has become so normalized that we don’t even recognize violence against Asian bodies as racist,” Quizon said. “It’s heartbreaking to see people enjoy Asian food, Asian culture, and claim to love their Asian friends, but are so quick to overlook violence that threatens the Asian community.”

Diaz delved deeper into how Anti-Asian rhetoric has had a vast

impact on anti-Asian sentiment, especially during COVID-19.

“Things like the ‘Kung Fu virus’ and the ‘China virus’ have such a negative impact ... words have an impact, whether we can directly see it or not,” Diaz said. “We saw statistics that showed how at the start of COVID coming to the United States there was a spike in anti-Asian violence, and that’s not a coincidence, that’s a causal effect.”

As an Asian American, Quizon has felt an immense amount of grief and defeat that her community, organization, and family have felt before, and continue to feel during these times.

“It’s heartbreaking to watch people who look like you or like your parents and grandparents become victims of racial violence,” Quizon said. “It’s difficult to navigate predominantly white spaces as it is, but with the pandemic, anti-Asian sentiment has become more apparent and has made it harder to feel comfortable and safe.”

Quizon explained that FUSO will continue to emphasize its efforts to “provide a community and safe space on campus for Asian students,” and other

students who are seeking a sense of belonging.

FUSO addressed the wave of violence toward the Asian-

***“It’s difficult to navigate predominantly white spaces as it is, but with the pandemic, anti-Asian sentiment has become more apparent and has made it harder to feel comfortable and safe.”***

**- Anica Quizon, Junior**

American community in their statement: *“These hate crimes are a direct consequence of how the model minority myth has upheld white supremacy and normalized racism against Asian Americans. The Filipino Ugnayan Student Organization at the University of San Diego condemns any form of racism toward marginalized communities, including the violence against the Asian American community.”*

USD’s Asian Students Association (ASA) also expressed their concerns regarding rising anti-Asian sentiment and violence in the community. Co-president of ASA, junior Sally Ryu, addressed what needs to be done in order for the Asian-American community to feel seen and supported through such difficult times.

“I think we need to continue to share and educate those around us, especially through social media,” Ryu said. “We

can also take action, even make small podcasts or create content that promotes Asian-American businesses and spread awareness this way.”

Ryu was surprised by a large number of hate crimes and incidents toward the Asian-American community since last Spring.

“It just shows how many AAPI individuals are being affected by hate crimes and how it is not being brought up in the media or news outlets,” Ryu said. “It does not get enough attention and it hurts to see our community hurt.”

The most important thing to do amidst these recent attacks on the Asian-American community is to “listen,” says junior, Brittany Le, member of ASA.

“By listening to the stories of

the victims of racism and opening our minds to new perspectives, we can further synthesize a better understanding of what anti-

racism means to us,” Le said.

In their statement, ASA addressed their community’s concerns:

*“We often feel helpless because of our limited representation in the media and our issues are often overlooked. Certain rhetoric, such as the usage of the term ‘Chinese virus’ by former President Trump, has done nothing but further, alienate and marginalize Asian-Americans. Moving forward, we should listen to and validate the stories of those who faced instances of oppression and violent crime.”*

“Stop AAPI Hate” encourages individuals to “Act Now” and allows them to report any hate incident toward the AAPI community through its official website.

## USD student employees now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine

*The beginning of student vaccinations begin with Residential Assistants and other USD employees*

**Vaccines from Page 1**  
Assistants are also able to receive the vaccine now.

On March 1, USD student employees received a letter from Residential Life informing them of their eligibility and options for receiving the vaccine. USD is not administering vaccinations on campus yet, so student employees can either wait until that is an option or they can be vaccinated at a county site.

Claire Wagner, a sophomore RA at USD, received her first dose on March 5.

“I think getting vaccinated is a really important way that we need to protect each other and protect ourselves,” Wagner said. “I know personally that being in duty situations makes me really nervous of potentially catching COVID-19 from a resident who is not wearing a mask or not following the guidelines and

mandates, so I’m really excited. It will make me feel more protected.”

While getting vaccinated is highly encouraged, it is not required by the university at this point. Once San Diego reaches Phase 2 of vaccinations and all students are eligible to receive a vaccine, the school could possibly make the COVID-19 vaccine a requirement, like many other vaccinations students have to receive before attending school.

In a forum with Associated Student Government on Feb. 23, Cynthia Avery, Ed.D., assistant vice president of student life at USD, said that if vaccines are readily available to the general public by Fall 2021, all students will be required to receive a vaccine if they are to come on campus, just as they would for any other vaccine. However, a lot of people are concerned about the COVID-19 vaccine since it is so

new, so requiring students to get it could be a challenge.

San Diego has already vaccinated 10% of the entire county

population. USD has already begun to administer vaccinations and as pharmaceutical companies continue to ramp up production

of the vaccine, it is likely that a functional on-campus vaccination site and student vaccinations are not too distant.



Student employees received an email on March 1 that they were eligible to receive the vaccine. Photo courtesy of Hakan Nural/Unsplash



# USD plans to move forward with Fall 2021 study abroad

*After a year without study abroad programs, USD is moving forward with plans for Fall 2021, with hopes of an increase in vaccinations and a decrease of COVID-19 cases*

MARY CRAVENS  
CONTRIBUTOR

After canceling all Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021 study abroad programs, USD says it is moving forward with study abroad for Fall 2021 with applications closing March 17. The hope of studying abroad brings a lot of excitement, concerns, and questions. With approximately 150 students having now applied for study abroad programs, an important question is whether their program will be canceled, and if it is, what that will mean for the students.

Kira Espirtu, the director of international study abroad, explained the efforts the International Center will make to accomodate students if their program is canceled.

“We will work with students individually should they need to return home while abroad on a program,” Espiritu said in an email. “While we really hope that nothing happens after a program begins, we cannot control that as we found out in Spring 2020 when we had students abroad as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. We will work with students individually should they need to return home while abroad on a program.”

According to the International Center, students need to be ready for their program to be deemed unsafe and canceled. However, if a program is canceled before it starts, the International Center will work with students to “determine if other program

options are still available,” according to Espiritu. The center suggests that students register for on-campus classes in San Diego, and prepare two plans for the fall semester, one if their study abroad happens and one if it does not.

When programs were canceled last year, students were left on their own when coming home. Lexi Crea, a senior who was on Semester at Sea in Spring 2020, explained her experience.

“There were ten students from USD on Semester at Sea and I don’t remember them reaching out at all with anything helpful,” Crea said. “Nobody really helped us get home safely, USD didn’t, Colorado State didn’t, neither did SAS. They just kinda said, ‘Get home.’”

Despite the struggle of getting home, Crea added, “When they finally canceled the voyage it was kind of a relief. There had been eight itinerary changes so it was sort of a relief to know, okay this is the last stop. It’s over.”

My Ly Anna Nguyen, a senior who also attended Semester at Sea, had suggestions to avoid a repetition of her experience.

“They need to develop a contingency plan if anything goes wrong. I felt lost trying to book a flight home, people were scrambling, kids were crying,” Nguyen said. “Having a plan in case things go wrong would have been so much help, because at one point I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, I am going to be stuck in South Africa. Is this it for us?’ If possible, USD should have emergency funds to help students get home because



Students may need to get vaccinated before traveling abroad for Fall 2021.

Jennifer Mossuto/The USD Vista

it just sucked. It felt like we were alone.”

The students who have already applied for the fall do not have any guarantees that their program will happen. Students who had planned to study abroad this year experienced cancellations and their plans changing last minute. Junior Gabrielle Houston expressed her disappointment.

“I am devastated that I am not going to have the opportunity to study in another country, especially since one reason I came to USD was because of their study abroad program, and it’s a reason this school attracts a lot of other people too,” Houston said. “From freshman year, I had been sure to save my core for study abroad because there weren’t many psychology classes offered, but I had to take all of my core this year, which is upsetting because

I’m ending my college career taking mainly core instead of my major classes.”

As for COVID-19 precautions, it is highly suggested to get vaccinated before going abroad; however, a requirement for vaccinations may be necessary depending on the country. Currently, the only program that requires a student to get vaccinated is Semester at Sea.

“Semester at Sea is planning to sail in Fall 2021, and we have not heard anything different to date,” Espiritu said. “They are requiring all participants, and staff/crew, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.”

If a student gets COVID-19 abroad, USD has international medical insurance that will provide coverage. Students will be required to follow the public health rules of the country in which they are studying, according to the International Center’s Study Abroad COVID FAQs, available on its website. The International Center is “hopeful that restrictions will begin to ease as the availability of vaccines increases,” according to Espiritu.

For juniors who were unable to go abroad this year, attending an affiliate university allows for the possibility of studying abroad senior year, circumventing the graduation requirement of completing a student’s last 30 units on USD’s campus. Overall, there does not seem to be a

drastic amount of changes made to studying abroad, but there are fewer places open for student travel.

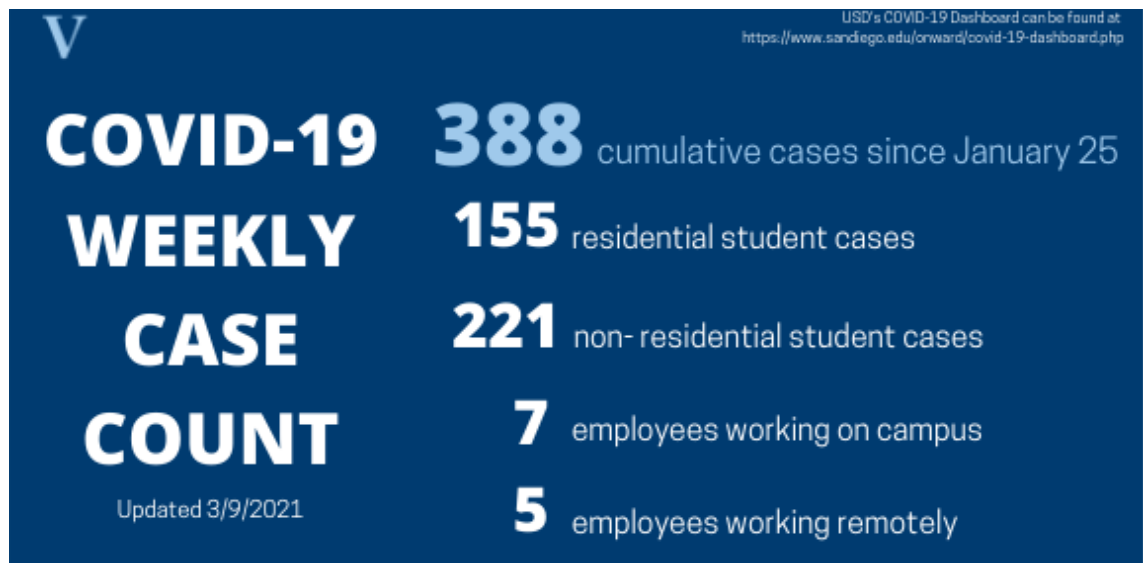
Tuition for each program is due 10 days before the start date, and is equivalent to USD’s current on-campus tuition. There are scholarships available and can be found on the USD International Center website. If a program is canceled, students will be refunded the program fee. According to the International Center’s policies, refunds will not be issued starting 10 days after arrival if a student decides to withdraw. Students are hopeful that the Fall 2021 study abroad programs will not be canceled. Kat Pereira, a sophomore who applied to the Madrid program for the fall, has mixed feelings about the possibility.

“I really hope it’s not canceled,” Pereira said. “I miss traveling. I’m excited about meeting new people, seeing new places, and also just embracing a new culture since it’s been so long since I’ve been able to do that.”

While excited, she also has concerns.

“I’m sort of nervous about whether or not I’m even going to have housing if it gets canceled, and how soon they are going to let us know if it is canceled,” Pereira said.

Hopes of increased access to vaccinations and lower global cases are motivating Fall 2021 study abroad plans.



## The USD Vista

Editorial – 619.260.4584  
Business – 619.260.4714  
[www.uofsdmedia.com](http://www.uofsdmedia.com) / @TheUSDVista

Celina Tebor - Editor in Chief  
Jennifer Mossuto - Associate Editor  
Catherine Silvey - Managing Editor  
Mikaela Foehr - Copy Editor  
Tori Tanigawa - Art Director  
Tyler Pugmire - News Editor  
Alena Botros - Opinion Editor

Brittany Lang - Feature Editor  
Taylor DeGuzman - Arts & Culture Editor  
Eric Boose - Sports Editor  
Sean Butler - Distribution Manager  
Regan Ferarri - Social Media Manager  
Austin Piona - Finance Manager  
MaryCatherine Smith - Advertising Manager

Gina Lew - Student Media Advisor  
Marie Minnick - Operations Advisor

The USD Vista publication is written and edited by USD students and funded by revenues generated by advertising and a student fee. Advertising material published is for information purposes only and is not to be construed as an expressed or implied endorsement or verification of such commercial venues by the staff or University. The USD Vista office is located on the fourth floor of the Student Life Pavilion in room 403B.

All inquiries should be sent to:  
**The USD Vista**  
5998 Alcalá Park  
San Diego, CA 92110

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of The USD Vista staff, the University of San Diego or of its student body. Letters to the Editor can be submitted to The USD Vista office. Letters should be limited to 300 words and must be signed. For identification purposes, USD identification numbers and writer’s year must be included in the letter. The USD Vista reserves the right to edit published letters. Any content sent to the editor will be considered for publication unless otherwise stated.



# OP-ED

## The vaccine will save lives

*Taking the coronavirus vaccine is essential to bringing an end to this pandemic*

VICTORIA FERGUSON  
CONTRIBUTOR

2020 has been a year of chaos, strife, and pain. The center of it all was the SARS-coV-2, or as we have come to call it, COVID-19. The identification and spread of the coronavirus began at the end of 2019, when the Hubei province in China reported cases of pneumonia, which were then discovered to actually be caused by a new strain of coronavirus. People were anxiously awaiting a treatment in order to recuperate from that year of chaos, strife, and pain.

Over a year later, the FDA gave emergency authorization to use a COVID-19 vaccine. The first company to successfully develop and test the vaccine, Pfizer-BioNTech, followed by Moderna, perfected the vaccine by its use of mRNA, or messenger RNA. The mRNA works by instructing our cells to produce a copycat form of COVID-19's signature "spike" protein which in turn triggers a person's immune response. In order to successfully accomplish its task, two doses of the mRNA vaccine is required.

Just last month, Johnson & Johnson released its vaccine, which is made from live attenuated virus and only

requires one dose.

The ultimate purpose of the vaccine is to prevent COVID-19 infection, so that once we are all immune we can go back to normal life before the events of 2020. At the very least, the vaccines have been shown to prevent serious disease requiring hospitalization and lessen the risk of death. Hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives to this virus in the United States alone. Across the world, it has killed almost 3 million people. It is imperative that we, as a society, take the vaccine to not only save ourselves, but to save the lives of everyone around us.

Pharmaceutical companies and medical experts advised that the vaccine be released in multiple phases. Phase 1A gave priority to healthcare workers and long-term care facility residents. It is those very people who need to be protected the most, and taking the vaccine brings us one step closer to keeping them safe and sound during these troublesome times.

San Diego is currently in Phase 1B, allowing frontline essential workers, like the staff at University of San Diego (USD), and people above the age of 75 to get the vaccine. Phase 1C guarantees the vaccine for people from ages 16-74 with



The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is one of three vaccines currently available.

Photo courtesy of Baltimore County Government/flickr

medical conditions as well as other essential workers.

Over 78,000,000 people have been vaccinated in the U.S., but, as with every vaccine there has been opposition, most based on the fear of the side effects. Some people are afraid they will actually get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

There have been reports of

people that died after taking the vaccine. Tim Zook, a 60-year-old X-ray technologist, got his vaccine on Jan. 5, and four days later, died from organ failure. There is no proof that the vaccine caused his death, yet anti-vaxxers are using stories like Zook's to support their invalid argument by using the tragedy of people's deaths. According to the

CDC, the potential side effects of taking the vaccine are fever, chills, tiredness, and headache, as well as a very sore arm, which are common with any vaccine. It would be better to experience a couple days of chills and fever rather than spending weeks in the hospital suffering or even dying.

Experts estimate that 70-90% of the population will need to be vaccinated in order to reach herd immunity.

If only a few people get the vaccine, it is not going to be helpful going forward, but if everyone gets it, then we have a better chance of our next generations only having to worry about COVID-19 as you would care about the common cold today.

It is essential that we are united on this issue for the betterment of mankind. Our local community can start one step at a time. USD is already providing great resources for the students by offering free testing on campus through Rady Children's Hospital.

As access to the vaccine increases at USD, the administration should begin contributing to the decline of COVID-19 by including information on their website, social media, etc., concerning who can receive the vaccine and when they can receive it, as well as where to go to get one.

This pandemic has really helped demonstrate how interconnected we all are as a species. And if we are to be successful as a species, we need to all be on the same page as far as taking these vaccines.



A patient receiving first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The second dose of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines must be administered two weeks after initial dose.

Photo courtesy of PMO Barbados/flickr

The views expressed in the editorial and op-ed sections are not necessarily those of *The USD Vista* staff, the University of San Diego, or its student body.



# OP-ED

## How USD can strive for a greener approach

*The lack of sustainability of USD’s COVID-19 quarantine procedures*

MARIA SIMPSON  
ASST. NEWS EDITOR

USD’s COVID-19 quarantine and isolation procedures have been in full swing since students arrived on campus last semester. Students who test positive or are contact traced are isolated in quarantine housing for 10 days and have all of their meals delivered, their laundry done, and their trash picked up at their door by staff members. The process is efficient, but sometimes efficiency comes with consequences, specifically environmental consequences. USD’s efficient quarantine practices have contributed huge amounts of waste and makes little effort to be sustainable.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture “in the United States, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply” in 2010 which is “approximately 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food.” The USD quarantine routine has contributed its own abundance of food waste. Every day, students in isolation are given three large meals and a multitude of snacks and drinks. For many students, this is far more than they can eat, so leftovers quickly build up.

Most of the food items distributed come in plastic boxes and the meals are delivered in large paper bags. This presents a



The USD quarantine routine has contributed its own abundance of food waste in giving students three large meals a day.

Photo courtesy of Lance Cheung/flickr

great opportunity for recycling, but the little recycling bins in the rooms are not large enough for all of the recyclable items. USD’s directions for quarantined students also never explicitly mention or encourage recycling. Quarantining students will have to continue for months to come, but environmentally friendly changes could be as simple as following the old adage, ‘reduce, reuse, and recycle.’

Reducing the waste would be difficult, but possible. A simple

solution would be for students to fill out a form at the beginning of their isolation period, stating how much food they tend to consume on a regular basis. Staff would maintain the same packing process; the only difference is if a student chose to receive large or small meals. In a world without a pandemic, another solution could be to reuse leftover bottles of water and nonperishable food items such as chips that students have not opened. They could

either be returned to the SLP or donated to a food bank, although COVID-19 guidelines may not permit this solution.

Finally, it would be easy to encourage students to recycle their empty water bottles, food containers, and paper bags. USD could also provide trash bags that are explicitly for recycling in order to accommodate more items. This waste issue poses a big problem, and it is not an easy one to fix. USD is doing everything they can to take

care of these students, but they are also doing what is most convenient for the situation. This is a reflection of a larger problem of convenience and “throw away culture” that we see across our society today. It could be worth taking a less convenient option if it is healthier for the environment in the long run. USD has done work to become a greener campus in many ways. Hopefully the school will be able to embrace a few changes to make quarantine sustainable.

# THE USD VISTA

COME WRITE FOR US!  
ZOOM MEETINGS EVERY TUESDAY AT  
12:30 P.M.  
ZOOM LINK ON INSTAGRAM  
@THEUSDVISTA

# Lessons on Allyship from the Freedom Writers

The College of Arts and Sciences, in collaboration with the Humanities Center and University Ministry, hosted an event for the Jewish Culture and Antisemitism Series on March 6. The events featured guest speaker Erin Gruwell, the real-life Freedom Writers teacher upon which the 2007 film “Freedom Writers” is based, as well as some of her freedom writer students. She gave a talk focused on the idea that justice and radical change for every community or group that is facing oppression cannot be achieved alone, and that allyship is one of the most important facets of the human experience.

Gruwell’s career as an educator was defined by her experiences when she began teaching at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California in 1994 — a school that was marked by racial division and violence. As seen in the Freedom Writers film, through the power of literature, storytelling, and lessons on the importance of recognizing what ties humans together rather than the physical differences that exist between groups, she helped change the lives of the 150 students who passed through her classroom.

Gruwell discussed the transformative experiences that occurred for her students after she invited Auschwitz survivor, Renee Firestone, into her high school classroom after they began reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Firestone has maintained a close relationship with the Freedom Writers and Gruwell since they met all those years ago. When they first met Firestone, she had already been sharing her story as a Holocaust survivor for 50 years with the hope that she could teach people how to be more humane, accepting, and inclusive. Gruwell recounted something Firestone repeats often in her talks and something she said when she first met the freedom writers — a warning against the great harm that can come when good people don’t speak up for those whose voices are stifled.

**“She would say, ‘Evil prevails when good people do nothing ... you no longer have the luxury of standing idly by and doing nothing.’” - Erin Gruwell**

In her talks, Firestone emphasizes that as someone who has lived through a genocide, any level of hate and exclusivity cannot be tolerated. This is what she urged the freedom writers to spend the rest of their lives fighting — against injustice faced by all people, not just by their own.

“It was as if this baton was passed to each and every one of them (freedom writer students),” Gruwell said. “For so many freedom writers, silence had been their mantra ... when they saw things they weren’t supposed to see, they just turned around — they walked the other direction, and Renee said, ‘no, not on my watch. You have got to stand up.’”

These words from Firestone were catalysts for the freedom writers to make pivotal changes in their lives — to start listening and identifying all the ways hate manifests itself. They started to pick up their pens, just like Anne Frank, and right their wrongs.

**“The power of words is a legacy, not weapons,”  
- Erin Gruwell**





*Photo courtesy of the U.S. Embassy of Jerusalem*



*Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons / Anonymous*



*Photo courtesy of Erin Gruwell*



*Photo courtesy of Erin Gruwell*



# FEATURE

## Using fitness to combat hunger: Vizer Workout App

*The Vizer App seeks to improve the health and well-being of the community as a whole*

**From Page 1**

USD, which is publicly funded in a partnership with USD, working to provide free and confidential support to small businesses that are innovative in technology.

As one of the first ten clients of The Brink, Vizer received plenty of assistance from advisors. Director of The Brink Rachel Lozano Castro was one of the individuals who guided the creators in beginning their journey towards health for the whole community.

“The Brink has been able to help with Vizer’s development in a variety of ways when it comes to monetizing, legal aspects, relationship development, and the strategic buildup of the team,” Castro said.

Vizer made its way to USD’s campus community during this past fall semester.

Upon receiving the news that the semester would be remote for all USD students, Jordaine Tran, student facilities supervisor and senior at USD, pitched the idea of bringing

Vizer to USD Campus Recreation in a meeting with the team.

“We were thinking of workout-oriented things to do, while keeping in mind social distancing protocols,” Tran said. “I knew it was a great way for people to use their exercise to get active, while also helping the general San Diego community.”

Everyone on the Campus Recreation team loved the idea of bringing the workout app to USD, Tran said. Students can download the app for free and automatically track their daily steps and activity through their phone, Apple Watch, or Fitbit and ultimately donate a meal by the end of the day.

Students can also reach their fitness goals and donate meals by booking an appointment through Campus Recreation at one of their outdoor facilities — they are currently offering swim, tennis, and TRX — and eventually at Bosley Fitness Center and the Jenny Craig Pavilion when they open up again.

Participants can choose to

log their workout and donate a meal at a kiosk on their way into their on-campus workout, or on their way out after their workout is complete, making meal donations as simple as possible.

Through using the Vizer app, students in San Diego can even find local San Diego gyms, earn points with each meal donation that can then be redeemed at different San Diego restaurants, and ultimately work toward community health while improving their own health.

Tran shared some of her personal experiences with the workout app.

“My friend and I play tennis together and the app encourages us to play,” Tran said. “We can get our fitness in while helping someone in need.”

Some USD athletes are especially intrigued by the app and its benefits. Sean Van de Grift, a sophomore on the USD rowing team, spoke about his daily activity as a USD athlete.

On most days of the week, Van de Grift has two practices a day that

include cardio sessions, aerobic training, and weight lifting. Being a rower for six years, Van de Grift has had plenty of experience tracking his activity using a heart rate monitor.

He mentioned his interest in using Vizer because of its community service aspect, but also mentioned the limitations of not having an Apple Watch or Fitbit.

“Without an Apple Watch or Fitbit, it’s hard to track all the activities, other than just the steps,” Van de Grift said.

Despite this, Van de Grift is still interested in tracking his own steps as he goes about his daily training. He went on to describe the opportunities and possibilities that he can see for the app at USD, especially among athletes.

“I’ve thought about how beneficial it could be if all the athletes at USD were tracking the workouts that they would be doing anyway,” Van de Grift said.

All of that activity means all of those meal donations.

Another USD athlete, Benjamin Keefer, is a sophomore on USD’s club rugby team. He trains for his sport throughout the week by lifting weights, going on runs, and practicing on the field with his teammates.

He used to track his activity using the Adidas Running App by Runtastic, but eventually started tracking his activity on his own. The benefits of Vizer peaked Keefer’s interest.

“I would definitely use Vizer,” Keefer said. “It sounds very beneficial to tracking and keeping you accountable, while also having a good cause.”

Vizer has already donated almost 800,000 meals, at the time of print, to the community, and users can increase that number each day just by being active.

USD Campus Recreation has worked diligently to assure that using the Vizer app is as user-friendly as possible for the USD community. Working toward one’s fitness goals while also giving to those in need has never been easier.

## The Lindsay J. Cropper Memorial Writer Series welcomes Alexis Jackson

*Alexis Jackson is the first writer to be featured in the Cropper Series this spring*

**ALENA BOTROS**  
*OPINION EDITOR*

On Thursday, March 3, the Cropper Series welcomed USD’s very own professor and poet Alexis Jackson for a reading and craft talk as the first event of the spring semester, before students completing the emphasis in creative writing read from their own works.

This past summer, the University of San Diego’s English department released a statement of solidarity, vowing to “reaffirm its commitment to the enduring work of anti-racism.” The department recognizes “the unique capacity of literature to remind us of the innate dignity of all human life” and in that, recognizes the responsibility the department has in the fight against racism.

The Lindsay J. Cropper Center for Creative Writing, established in 2004, announced that this year’s Cropper Memorial Writers Series would be “a celebration of Black creative work exclusively” in hopes to bring an understanding to a collective of human experiences.

Alexis V. Jackson, a Black woman writer and Philadelphia native, earned her MFA from Columbia University’s School of the Arts in 2018, where she was

a Chair’s Fellow. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a concentration in writing from Messiah College in 2013.

Jackson’s forthcoming debut collection, “My Sister’s Country,” has been selected as the second place winner of Kore Press Institute’s 2019 Poetry Prize. Jackson currently lectures in the University of San Diego’s English department. She has

***“The shame I and almost all of the women I knew were made to feel about the texture of their hair, the subject of their school essays, the way they wrote, the shape of their bodies, their righteous anger being called scary.”***

also taught poetry at Messiah College and served as a reader for several publications, including Callaloo & Bomb Magazine.

Director of the series, Professor Bradley Melekian introduced Jackson by reading emails from her own students, in which “they all spoke to Professor Jackson’s profound dedication to both her students and their craft.” Melekian said. “Here,” they said, “was a woman taking seriously her art and her students’ engagement with it.”

Jackson began by discussing the inspiration behind her collection.

“I wanted to make sure that no person like me looked for language to sustain them, language that was a reflection of them and couldn’t quite find it, not if I could write it,” Jackson said. “This, however, meant tackling shame as it has for some ways all Black women writers.”

Jackson explained what this shame entailed, giving her audience an insight into her life

and therefore into her writing.

“The shame I and almost all of the women I knew were made to feel about the texture of their hair, the subject of their school essays, the way they wrote, the shape of their bodies, their righteous anger being called scary,” Jackson said. “So, what this first collection is, is me trying to fit everything into one book of poem, all of it.”

She discovered in her “embracing and rejecting of poetic form, embracing and rejecting the great white poets, embracing and rejecting the Jesus she was given, embracing and rejecting

my inherited racial and gender shame,” was that her work was preoccupied with reimagining as is her legacy as a Black woman artist in this country.

Jackson moved to a reading and discussion of a Nikki Giovanni, a poet and writer at the forefront of the Black Arts movement, poem in hopes to, “usher (us all) into a space where (we) can see the

**- Alexis Jackson**

work that came in from which I am writing and the work I see myself in communication and conversation with.”

Giovanni’s poem “A Lady Whose Voice I Like,” is an example of the re-imaging Jackson discusses. In the poem, Giovanni takes a familiar text from scripture and replaces herself with Christ. Who the devil is, is unknown, but the devil uses language that is dialect.

As the text involves the devil’s temptation of Christ, in replacing herself with Christ she in turn is representing the resisting of shame through

the devil’s temptation. She reimagines, reshapes, and reforms the text in hopes to demonstrate the resistance of shame Black women face.

Later, Jackson introduced some of her own work from her collection which will debut in the fall of 2021. She read from her “Fresh Princess Sonnets,” from which attendees learned that she wanted to preserve Black vernacular, Philly vernacular, and “give Philly Black folk literature.” The sonnets exemplify who Jackson is as a Black woman from Philadelphia and her lived experiences. She uses her culture, the world around her, significant people and events, provoking thoughts and feelings, to construct these sonnets.

During the question and answer portion, Jackson said, like many others, she was overwhelmed in the beginning of the pandemic and struggled to write, but she forced herself to really sit down and write.

Jackson explained the way she was able to overcome this challenge was by waking up a “little earlier and writing for thirty minutes, sometimes it’s poetry and sometimes it’s not, but at least the writing is happening.”

Since its inception in 2004, the Cropper Center has prioritized bringing a diversity of voices to our campus.



# ARTS & CULTURE

## Embarrassing moments on campus we definitely don't miss

*The many reasons why Zoom University isn't all that bad*

**TAYLOR DEGUZMAN**  
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

You may think singing during a Zoom class while your mic was on, or pinning someone's screen while wearing blue light glasses, clearly showing their reflection, was embarrassing; but imagine how many embarrassing things happen in person.

Even though USD's campus is small, the embarrassing moments that happen are larger than life and most of the time unforgettable — especially by your best friends. Here are some of the top seven most embarrassing moments on campus you definitely don't miss.

### Dropping that glorious white SLP plate in front of a "live studio audience"

It's a beautiful Wednesday evening, yet another holiday-themed SLP dinner, and the aromas of every food station fill the air, signaling you to grab at least two plates full of food for your first round through. Juggling your HydroFlask, phone, and gluten-free cookies in one hand and two plates in another, you walk slowly out of line and toward your table.

Just when you thought being a waitress over the summer finally paid off, your plate full of chow mein, orange chicken, and shrimp fried rice comes crashing to the ground and the whole entire SLP goes silent. Suddenly, deafening applause and cheers that mimic a live studio audience make you the center of attention. Even worse, your friends are laughing just as hard as everyone else.

### Waving at someone in Colachis Plaza who wasn't waving at you

Nothing beats waving excitedly at someone who was absolutely not waving at you. During Torero Hours, everyone and their mother are out on the Colachis lawn and walking around the plaza to meetings, their next class, or to sunbathe and catch up with friends in between classes. Because so many people are out in the plaza, students randomly bump into friends or see them walking in the distance.

However, more often than not, we tend to get excited whenever we see someone waving to us, and because we are always the center of attention, we assume that they must be waving at us — wrong. It always happens to be the person behind

us or even beside us that is supposed to receive the greeting.

The best you can do is own it and pretend it never happened, even though everyone totally watched it happen.

would be getting SLP breakfast at the exact same time as you.

### Making everyone get off the tram just so you can get out

have to make everyone standing get off the tram in order for you to leave. The worst part is that there are at least 15 people standing that eye you and give you the most disapproving

until 6 a.m. The only fix: Starbucks down the hill. The only problem: making it to class on time while still being able to get your Starbucks.

You try to catch the tram to the west side of campus, but end up missing it. That's at least a 15-minute walk, 10 minutes if you manage to speed walk and not make conversation with random people you bump into. Either way, walking into class late is inevitable. The worst part is all the head turns and up-and-down looks you get when you walk into class 15 minutes later, clearly because of the Venti iced Americano in your hand.

### Walking up the Harry Potter Room steps

During midterms, and especially during finals season, the Harry Potter Room in Copley Library is the place to be. Even though many students flock here to study, it still remains the quietest place on campus.

Merely breathing seems to disrupt the quiet space. While a lot of desks and study spaces are on the first floor of the Harry Potter Room, many more desks for two to four people are located on the second floor.

It is the most awkward feeling to walk up the creaky stairs, Birkenstocks squeaking or Converse loudly tapping the floor, and try not to catch a glimpse of everyone in the Harry Potter Room stopping to watch as you quite loudly climb the stairs, only to find out that all desks are full and you have to make your way back down.

### Flinching during class because you're falling asleep

Many forget the reality of in-person classes: being in person and in front of actual people, not just screens. Whereas online it is easy to zone out or turn off your screen, there is no room to check out without your professor noticing.

After all-nighters or a tiring weekend, it's so easy to close your eyes just for two seconds while your professor has their back turned. However, closing your eyes for two seconds means falling asleep, and having those dreams where you're jumping out of a plane or getting hit in the face.

Because of these "jump scare" dreams, you flinch the hardest you've ever flinched before, flailing your arms and body, in front of everyone and especially your professor who is well aware of what just happened.



The tram is known for abruptly stopping and accelerating, causing students to awkwardly fall left and right and onto other students. Tanner Claudio/The USD Vista



Dropping a plate in front of fifty other students, who immediately applaud and cheer, is a USD rite of passage. Tanner Claudio/The USD Vista

### Bumping into you-know-who getting SLP breakfast

It's the morning after, and you're starving for some good ol' tots, muffins, spring rolls, blueberry waffles, and scrambled eggs.

While waiting in line at Sea Salt Grille, you suddenly hear, "Oh hey," from a distinct voice.

Instantly you recognize it's you-know-who. Of course they

Ah yes, the trams. Everyone's favorite form of transportation.

After all seats are taken, students fill the aisles and pack the tram like sardines in a can in order to make it to class with seconds to spare. The only downside to packing the tram is that whenever you're the only one exiting the tram for a drop-off location that no one else is leaving at, and you're seated in the middle or the back, you

looks as you hop off the tram. It's probably the last time you use the tram for a while.

### Missing the tram, walking into class late, Starbucks in hand

Desperate times call for desperate measures. 8 a.m. classes are never fun to attend, especially when you spent the night before procrastinating



# How to be (lowkey) TikTok famous:

*USD students with large followings share their tips for finding an audience*

OLIVIA HUNT  
ASST. A&C EDITOR

TikTok is one of the most fertile digital grounds for creativity, inspiration, and of course, memes. Users can easily find others with common interests to connect with and share content.

Though some may attribute the app's popularity to the short video void left by Vine, there's more to it than that. The platform contains thousands of niche communities, from "FilmTok" (where people critique films or share their favorite movie scenes) to "WitchTok" (for those who practice witchcraft or wish to learn more about it).

No matter how silly or specific a topic may seem, there's bound to be an audience for it on the app. But what makes TikTok's top influencers different from those on other forms of social media? The main difference, it seems, is age. While platforms like Instagram and Youtube have more seasoned, professional influencers, the most popular users on TikTok are ages 25 and younger.

Being a TikTok influencer also appears to require completely different types of content — instead of the more polished, aesthetic posts one might see from Instagram influencers, the content from TikTok stars feels more casual.

To help explain this phenomenon, four rising influencers at USD offered their insight into the ever-growing app.

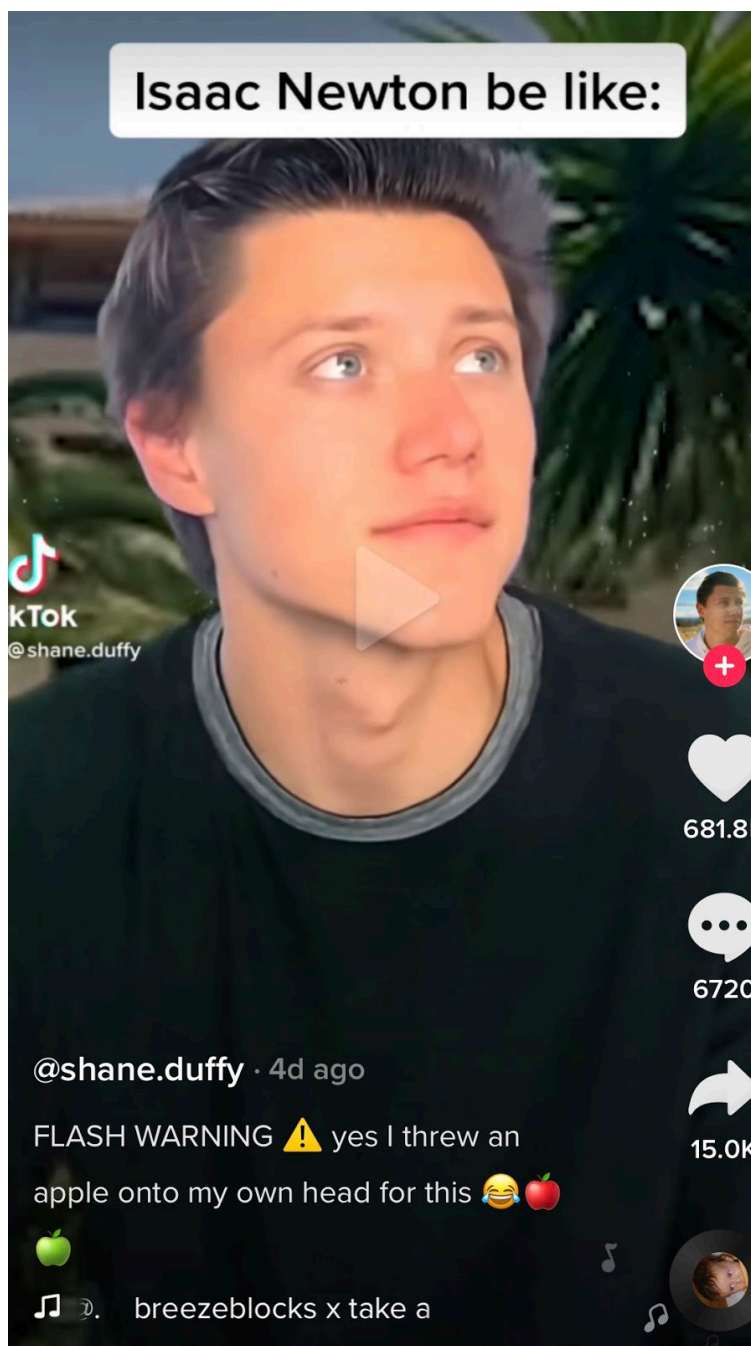
Senior Shane Duffy (@shane.duffy) has amassed over 120,000 followers on TikTok since starting his account last April.

Though he has had an impressive following for some time, Duffy only recently began creating content with a much larger audience in mind.

Some of his early posts were science-based comedic videos, and Duffy certainly didn't expect them to become as popular as they did.

"The first video to take-off was one where I made a joke about combing a neutron and uranium-235 to make nuclear fission," Duffy said. "I didn't really think much of the video when I made it, but I think it got on 'STEM-Major-Tok,' which really blew it up. I've only recently begun to think about the scope of people I'm making TikToks for. For the most part, making videos feels the same now with 100k followers as it did with 100 followers."

While Duffy's content has since expanded to include other comedic niches, two of his most recent viral videos poke fun at Isaac Newton and the Multiverse



Through creativity and consistency, Shane Duffy's follower count has skyrocketed over the past few months.

Photo courtesy of Shane Duffy

Theory, respectively.

Sophomore students Clareese Santiago and Savannah Alarcon also went viral after doing the "handshake challenge" in their USD Softball uniforms.

The video, titled "Handshakes for you and your homie: Softball Edition," has received 1.2 million views and 347K likes since its posting in late January.

Clareese Santiago (@clareesesantiago) explained the story behind the video and the response she received on her TikTok account.

"My best friend, Savannah Alarcon and I wanted to make some TikToks in our brand-new uniforms and thought that doing different handshakes would be really cool," Santiago said.

"We just love having fun so it came pretty naturally. We did not at all expect it to blow up the way it did. The video received both positive and negative feedback online, which was new to me because I was used to posting content mainly for my few followers and friends. I was not expecting to hit over a million views, but it was still very exciting."

Santiago believes that the most effective way to go viral is to let one's authentic self shine

through.

"I think it's really about having fun and letting loose," Santiago said. "Just being yourself and not worrying about potential backlash or hate."

Like Duffy and Santiago, Senior Lucy Sloan (@suorinjuice) never expected for her videos to reach as many people as they have.

She started her account in 2019 purely to watch other people's videos and didn't consider creating her own content until the first stay-at-home orders were issued. Since then, Sloan has amassed 13.8K followers and 103K likes spanning her videos.

She recounted the process of growing her account, which, at first, was completely inadvertent.

"My first post was a makeup video I made as a joke. Basically, it was a tutorial of how to make yourself look like Darth Maul," Sloan said. "Then, my followers increased to 10,000 after posting 'thirst trap' trend videos. But I've also had a video go viral where I compared my memory foam pillow to cheese so (going viral) can be very random."

Sloan notes that while it's difficult to plan for a specific video to go viral, there's ways to

grow your audience over time.

"Whether or not you go viral is a crapshoot. But you can up your editing game, make cool transitions, interpret current trends in a creative way, or capitalize on popular formats," Sloan said.

Duffy had similar thoughts about the randomness of going viral.

"My favorite thing (about TikTok) is that really anyone can go viral," Duffy said. "Since users are constantly being shown content from people they don't follow through the For You Page (FYP), it opens the door for anyone to have a video that blows up."

He also explained ways in which TikTok creators can increase viewers' engagement.

"What I've found making TikToks is that it's all about watch time. When making a video, cut any unnecessary parts from it, and only keep what you think people will be engaged with," Duffy said. "Also, consistency is key. You don't have to make multiple videos a day, but at least one a day is a good place to start."

Since its launch five years ago, TikTok has certainly cemented its place among the top social media platforms.

And it seems that it's on track to surpass Instagram, the

current most popular platform in terms of monthly users and app downloads.

Sloan offered her opinion as to why the app is sure to have a long-term impact.

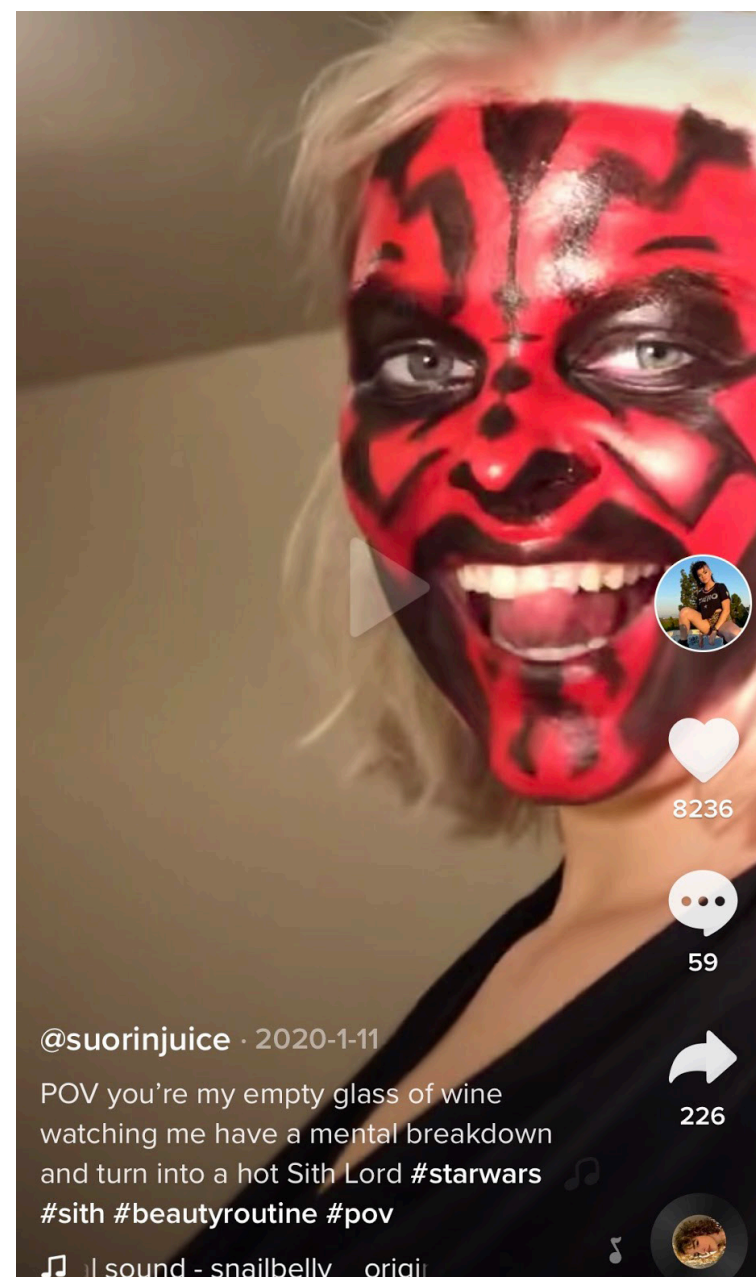
"TikTok has already transformed other platforms, like the Reels feature on Instagram and other non-video based platforms," Sloan said. "The only constant throughout Internet culture is the necessity of change, so I'm sure TikTok will evolve over time. It's too monetized and popular to die out, like Vine did."

Santiago felt similarly about the influence of TikTok and its success.

"TikTok will continue to change other social media platforms because it is so successful. It captures people's attention and has so much variety to it. The app also definitely caters to its viewers," Santiago said.

With the ever-growing popularity of TikTok, all signs seem to point toward social media becoming more and more video-based in the future.

If someone has a funny or interesting idea, they might as well make a TikTok about it. Even if it doesn't become the next viral video, challenge, or meme, it's bound to resonate with at least one other person.



One of Lucy Sloan's first TikToks was a video of her doing a Darth Maul make-up look. Photo courtesy of Lucy Sloan



# SPORTS

## Women’s basketball misses tournament due to COVID-19

*Two-week pause keeps Toreros from making trip to Vegas for WCC tourney*

**ERIC BOOSE**  
SPORTS EDITOR

A year after coming within seconds of the West Coast Conference tournament title, the University of San Diego women’s basketball team missed the tournament entirely due to a positive COVID-19 test within the program. USD announced on Feb. 25 that the team would not compete for two weeks due to the positive result, meaning the team would not travel to Las Vegas for the tournament, which began on March 4.

USD Athletics’ strategic communications department said that the team would not take questions about them missing the tournament, but a player agreed to speak to *The USD Vista* on the condition that they not be named.

“I think everybody was really bummed and sad that we weren’t going to have two more weeks of playing,” the player said, describing the team’s reaction

when the pause was announced. “It was hard to hear, and the team reacted with ... we were just shocked, and sad, and not happy about it, but there was nothing really we could do.”

She added that seeing the WCC tournament progress without the Toreros has been difficult.

“It hasn’t been easy to see other WCC teams playing in the tournament when we’re not and we’re sitting in quarantine,” she said.

USD Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Athletics Bill McGillis called the season-ending pause “devastating.”

“I’ve delivered a lot of tough messages in my career, but to have to tell a team that their season had abruptly come to an end was heartbreaking,” McGillis said via email. “Every little girl who plays basketball dreams of playing in the NCAA tournament, so it is especially difficult for these women to not have the opportunity to play for

the WCC championship and the league’s automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. We certainly have a team that was capable of winning it all.”

As McGillis pointed out, the situation is especially heartbreaking because the Toreros were seconds away from winning the entire competition last year, falling in overtime to the Portland Pilots, and while their road would not have been easy, they would have had a decent crack at getting back to the finals this year. USD finished the regular season with a 9-5 record in WCC play (12-7 overall), which would have made them the fourth seed, needing only two wins to make a return trip to the championship game.

Of course, one of those games would have been a semifinal matchup with the top-seeded Gonzaga Bulldogs, who beat the Toreros 69-47 in San Diego on Feb. 20. But nothing is guaranteed, and USD did claim victories over the third-seed USF Dons and second-seed

BYU Cougars during the regular season, so an upset against the Zags would not have been out of the question.

But there will be no upset. And, in missing the conference tournament, San Diego has also missed their best chance of playing meaningful postseason basketball. The winner of the WCC tournament automatically earns a bid to March Madness. No tournament means no automatic bid for the Toreros. They are not likely to make it as an at-large team either; USD is 119th in the NCAA Evaluation Tool (NET) rankings. Only 64 teams make the NCAA tournament.

There is another option: the Women’s National Invitational Tournament (WNIT). Since the first round of this year’s women’s NIT starts March 19, the Toreros would be able to play if they get selected. But that is still just an “if.” The WNIT only takes 32 teams. Working purely off the NET rankings, the selection committee would have to overlook 23 teams ahead of

San Diego in the rankings for the Toreros to get a spot in that tournament. The WNIT field will be announced Monday, March 15, but according to the player, any and all postseason basketball is out of the question for USD.

“It is season over for the team,” she said. “I’m not sure why, but I think because we didn’t play in the WCC tournament, and other reasons, we don’t qualify for a postseason tournament. So, basically, there is no postseason.”

While this season may be over, McGillis was optimistic about the team’s prospects for next season.

“I’m proud of the class of the women in our program and the manner in which they dealt with adversity throughout the season, including in that final moment,” McGillis said. “I do know that we have a very resilient and talented group and that, for those who return, we will be well positioned to experience March Madness next year.”

## Toreros taken down in the first round

*USD men’s basketball loses in first round of WCC Tournament to USF*

**MARIA WATTERS**  
ASST. SPORTS EDITOR

The University of San Diego’s men’s basketball team squared off against the University of San Francisco Dons in the first round of the 2021 West Coast Conference Tournament on Thursday, March 4.

The Dons dominated the first round contest from start to finish. USF outscored USD 30-17 in the first half, and their impermeable defense prevented the Toreros from making a dent in their daunting lead. While the Toreros managed to double their first-half scoring, racking up 34 points in the second half, the Dons continued to build their lead. In the end, USF defeated USD 67-51.

The 2020-21 season for USD’s men’s basketball team has been a struggle on every level. On the court, the Toreros had much room for improvement after finishing 9-23 last season. Just two seasons ago, USD was a force in the WCC, finishing 21-15 with a deep postseason run in the WCC Tournament as well as a National Invitation Tournament (NIT) berth for the

first time in program history. The team was unable to build on that momentum last season after graduating multiple starters, and it seemed much work was needed in order to return to the NIT.

The Toreros didn’t fare much better this season, despite retaining most of their starters, as well as acquiring promising forward redshirt senior Josh Parrish via a transfer from Rice

just been a year full of ups and downs, full of random turns to the point where we couldn’t even practice as a team for an extended period of time,” Parrish said. “When you can’t practice you can’t really get together, you can’t really get that chemistry as a unit. It’s kind of tough to come out here and perform to the best of our abilities.”

But the WCC Tournament presented a good opportunity

the Dons’ junior forward Dzmitry Ryuny sank a three pointer following an offensive rebound, putting them up 3-0 over the Toreros. The Dons kept USD scoreless for the first three minutes of play, while building a solid seven-point lead.

The Toreros scored their first basket after redshirt junior center Vladimir Pinchuk rebounded a missed field goal by his teammate, redshirt junior

but failed to prevent the Dons from absolutely dominating the remaining 12 minutes of the half. USF proceeded to score twice as many baskets as USD for the rest of the half, leaving the court with a 13-point lead at 30-17.

The Toreros had a significant hill to climb in the second half if they were to have any chance of defeating the Dons. USD converted a mere seven of their 27 attempted field goals and only one of their nine attempted three pointers in the first half. USF was far more productive on the scoring end, converting 43% of their field goals and 23% of their three point shots.

USD took the court for the second half with a daunting challenge before them. Down 13 points, the Toreros would have to play some of their best basketball in the next twenty minutes in order to have a chance at winning.

The first minute of the second half ticked by without a basket from either team, and then the game erupted into a shooting match. The two teams scored seven baskets in the next minute of play, starting with a layup from USF’s redshirt

***“The games we played serve as an evaluation tool because they were opportunities for us to compete. I have a good feel of what we have moving forward, where we need to get better, and what we need to develop.”***

***- Head Coach Sam Scholl***

University. Their disappointing 3-10 finish during the regular season can be at least partially attributed to their inability to practice and play games, due to three COVID-19-induced pauses, each of which lasted two weeks. The Toreros were only able to play 13 of their 23 scheduled regular season games.

The impact of the difficult season followed the Toreros into the tournament.

“This year, in general, has

for USD to close out the season on a high note as they were set to face a struggling Dons team. USF entered the tournament with an 11-13 record and riding a 6-game losing streak. But despite their recent lack of success, the Dons had played 11 more regular season games than the Toreros. Either way, Thursday’s contest had all the makings for a highly competitive opening to the 2021 WCC Tournament.

USF drew first blood after

forward Jared Rodriguez and scored off of a layup, taking their first step toward closing the gap. USD continued to chip away at the USF lead by going on a 5-point run, nearly overtaking the Dons at 7-8.

But the Dons responded with a scoring run of their own, knocking down six unanswered points in less than a minute. The Toreros were able to end the USF run at 9-14 with a layup from sophomore Yavus Gultekin,

**Con’t on Page 12**



# Gonzaga hands USD first loss of the conference season

*Women’s soccer unable to contain the Bulldogs in a 3-0 defeat at home*

YANA KOURETAS  
CONTRIBUTOR

As the University of San Diego women’s soccer opened up their second match of the West Coast Conference at home, they were unable to hold onto the recent fortune from their 2-0 win at LMU. The University of Gonzaga Bulldogs bested them with a 3-0 shutout win, using their powerful shots and aggressiveness to coast right past the Toreros.

The Bulldogs uncorked the first of what would total 12 first-half shots in the second minute, with a low, driven shot that sophomore goalkeeper Ellyn Casto barely deflected outside of the goal frame. Shortly after, in the fourth minute, another Bulldog shot from an opportunity taken from the outside flank left Casto scrambling. Gonzaga continued this pattern for a majority of the first half, exploiting the wings and beating the Torero defenders to get off low and clean shots from the edge of the box.

Senior Katie Lapomarda, who started each half of the match, summed up the team’s pitfall that resulted in their defeat.

“We gave it our all and came out short,” Lapomarda said. “We couldn’t execute, and that was just the biggest thing. We created a lot of opportunities, but they were constantly getting blocked or deflected.”

Though the Toreros struggled to mitigate a steady stream of Bulldog shots, they too started strong and were almost able to match the Zags’ opportunities early in the first half. The Toreros’ first shot came in the 10th minute from Lapomarda, and soon after sophomore forward Bekah Valdez put another shot on target.

The Toreros looked like they were going to hold down the



The Bulldogs and Toreros have split their last ten matches (including Saturday), with each team recording five wins.

Bulldogs for the rest of the half, but they were eventually broken down. In the late 20th minute, Gonzaga fired a series of two shots; one that Casto punched wide with a diving save and another that barely skimmed the post to go out of bounds. The Bulldogs surged forward with this confidence and finally put away a goal five minutes before the half ended, obstructing the Toreros’ view of a scoreless half. It was one skillfully placed pass behind the Torero defense that allowed first-year forward Sydni Burrup a clear shot right past Casto.

This moment of weakness was a turning point for the Toreros, according to Lapomarda.

“After Gonzaga’s first goal, it was just a mentality thing,” Lapomarda said. “When they

scored, it was kind of a reality check and made us realize that we needed to step up and start getting more into tackles and putting our bodies on the line.”

In the second half, the Toreros pursued a similar pattern, with a string of early chances starting in the 40th minute. Lapomarda struck a driving shot that was kept out by Bulldogs sophomore goalkeeper Lyza Bosselmann, resulting in a Torero corner. Although the corner service by senior midfielder Sami Weather wasn’t accurate enough to effect a substantial chance, it did mark one of six of the times the Toreros broke down the Bulldogs to produce a corner kick in the half.

At the 50th minute mark, the Bulldogs’ strength in the air shined when they were awarded

a corner kick, only one of two that they earned in the whole half. The kicker expertly floated the ball right onto the target head of sophomore forward Erin Healy, who finished the opportunity. Within the next twenty minutes, the visitors did not afford the Toreros any more threatening opportunities and instead collected the final goal of the game. It was first-year forward Kate Doyle, who also assisted the previous goal, that scored from a lofted ball that she collected and drilled past the Toreros’ substitute goalkeeper, sophomore Sarah Young.

Despite a win looking more unreachable for the Toreros, it was clear that they maintained a strong mentality and kept their hearts in the game until the very end. The Toreros began to

Tanner Claudio/The USD Vista command the match in the last five minutes as they turned on the heat to earn four corner kicks in two minutes. It was first-year midfielder Leah Pirro who gave the Toreros their best prospects of the game when she got onto the end of a rapid header from the corner, which skimmed past the Bulldogs goalkeeper but didn’t have enough power to reach the back of the net. Pirro carried on this streak by cracking a shot in the final minute, which barely soared over the top of the goalpost, putting the Toreros’ total shot count at 13 to the Bulldogs’ 20.

The Toreros will look to put this defeat behind them and redeem themselves as they go back on the road to face off against Saint Mary’s on Saturday, March 13 at noon.

## From Page 11

junior guard Khalil Shabazz. USD responded with a layup of their own by junior guard Finn Sullivan. Both teams traded blows, but the Dons continued to outscore the Toreros, growing their lead to 16 at 21-37.

The Toreros were unable to stop the bleeding, despite being much more productive around the basket. A three-pointer by Ryuny brought the USF lead to 19 points as the scoreboard showed 40-21. USD kept the Dons’ lead from increasing for the next two minutes with a free throw from redshirt junior Joey Calcaterra and a layup by senior forward Yauhen Massalski, making the score 28-45.

But USF responded by holding the Toreros at 28 for six minutes, scoring 10 unanswered

points. When the score reached 28-55, the Dons had their biggest lead of the game — 27 points.

USD spent the remaining eight minutes of the game trying to chip away at the massive deficit that threatened to keep them from seeing the second

15 points of USF as time ticked away.

The last seconds counted down to the end of the Toreros’ season as the last buzzer sounded and the scoreboard showed a final score of 67-51. Despite scoring twice as many

Having defeated the Toreros, USF moved on to face Loyola Marymount University in the second round on Friday, but fell to the Lions in that game, losing 70-66.

With their 2020-21 season concluded, the question of what

brought them to the NIT.

With such little practice and so few games this season, it would seem that the task of improving will be a difficult one, but Head Coach Sam Scholl is confident he has seen enough to know what needs to be done.

“The games we played serve as an evaluation tool because they were opportunities for us to compete,” Scholl said. “I have a good feel of what we have moving forward, where we need to get better, and what we need to develop.”

Despite all the questions and uncertainty surrounding the team’s future, the one thing Torero men’s basketball fans can be certain of is that its team will be hard at work this off-season, striving to be a dominant force once again come next season.

***“This year, in general, has just been a year full of ups and downs, full of random turns to the point where we couldn’t even practice as a team for an extended period of time. When you can’t practice you can’t really get together, you can’t really get that chemistry as a unit. It’s kind of tough to come out here and perform to the best of our abilities.”***  
***- Josh Parrish, redshirt senior***

round of the tournament. With the score at 34-58, the Toreros went on an 8-point scoring run, cutting the lead to 16 points. But USD was unable to come within

baskets in the second half as they did in the first, USD was unable to overcome the scoring and defensive power from the Dons.

will happen with Torero men’s basketball looms. Looking back at their last two seasons show that it will take some serious work to return to the level that